



CALIFORNIA WHITewater GUIDE SCHOOL

Itinerary



MEETING PLACE:	Mother Lode River Center (6280 Hwy 49)—2.3 miles north of the bridge and opposite County road marker 26.51
GPS LOCATION:	38.825846, -120.940646
MEETING TIME:	8:00 AM
RETURN TIME:	Approximately 6:00 PM
RIVER RATING:	Class III-IV
RIVERS:	South Fork American, Merced, other California rivers
AGE LIMIT:	Minimum age is 16
TRIP LENGTH:	7 Days/6 Nights

Please fill out your Guest Registration form and return it to our office as soon as possible

Welcome to O.A.R.S.' California Guide School. Prior outdoor experience is not a prerequisite for this course. If you are in good shape, have a positive attitude and want to learn wilderness skills in an outdoor setting, you are sure to have a memorable experience and learn new skills that will last a lifetime. This school is designed for those hoping to become a professional river guide, as well as for people who would like to safely guide their own river trips and those simply wanting to learn more about whitewater rafting and the nuances a river journey entails.

Professional guides teach our California Guide School, each one passionate about the outdoors, whitewater rafting, river safety and sharing their knowledge. They all have formal whitewater rescue training and extensive backgrounds in leading whitewater rafting trips. This guide school provides the setting for participants to be able to competently maneuver rafts in intermediate Class III-IV whitewater, as well as training in swiftwater rescue techniques such as river crossings, swimmer rescue, foot entrapment, wilderness evacuation and emergency medical approaches. We teach paddle raft captaining, as well as an in-depth knowledge of whitewater rafting from A to Z.

AWARD-WINNING NATURE-BASED ADVENTURES SINCE 1969

O.A.R.S. has been in business for over 40 years and that is no accident. Great trips on some of the world's best rivers and coastlines are the recipe for this success. Always focused on our clients and their vacations, it is our genuine belief that river trips and nature-based adventures are extremely valuable life experiences. With

that as our foundation, we have committed ourselves over the years to providing the best trips available, always with an eye on improvement.

Course Content & Sample Itinerary

The following is an example of the daily itinerary for our Guide School:

Days 1-2

The first two days of the guide school are based at our campground at Mother Lode River Center along the South Fork of the American River. We'll discuss essential knowledge about equipment, river hydraulics and safety considerations. We'll learn about all the gear necessary for a successful rafting expedition and how to properly care for it. Each night we will discuss camp set-up, meal preparation, Leave No Trace ethics and a review of the day's lessons. Jeff Bennett's book, "The Complete Whitewater Rafter," will be our instruction manual and the studios among us will fall asleep reading it with the sounds of the river in our ears.

Days 3-4

Morning is spent reviewing equipment and making sure it is river ready. We push off onto the river after lunch, utilizing the knowledge gained the first 2 days of guide school. Depending on water flow and the morning's instruction, we raft a portion of the river, either the Upper (Chili Bar) or the Lower (The Gorge). We take turns as paddlers and paddle captains as we navigate the South Fork's Class III whitewater. We gain experience in understanding the hydraulics of the river. We learn how to use ropes and tie knots while practicing river crossings and a variety of rescue scenarios.

Days 5-7

Depending on water flows and group skills, we journey to other California rivers, such as the Merced River near Yosemite National Park, to hone the techniques learned throughout the previous four days. We spend nights in our riverside classroom before adjourning to a night spent under the stars. We return to Mother Lode River Center at approximately 6:00 pm.

The following list is an example of the course content taught at Guide School.

A. Swiftwater Navigation

- Paddle and oar raft techniques
- Route selection
- Hydraulics
- Strategies (momentum, ferry angles, laterals, etc.)
- Boat spacing and river etiquette
- Paddle & oar raft safety talks

B. Basic Swiftwater Rescue

- Swimming in whitewater
- Hand signals
- Ropes, knots, slings and anchors
- Flipped raft scenarios
- Wrapped raft scenarios
- Basic "Z" rig
- Throw bag technique
- Strainer and foot entrapment scenarios
- Accident protocol

C. Raft Rigging

D. Camp

- Tying up & anchoring boats overnight
- Food preparation
- Hand & dish wash system
- Minimum impact strategies (fire pans, sumps, etc)
- Porta-potties
- Lions & tigers & bears (critters & camping)
- Camp talk (client guidelines for camping)

- E. Equipment Care
 - Raft inflation & deflation
 - Raft handling & storage
 - Repair kit
- F. Leave No Trace
 - Review the 7 principles of Leave No Trace

What's Included?

- Skilled professional guide instructors
- 6 nights camping at Mother Lode River Center or other river accessible locations
- Meals from lunch on day 1 through lunch on day 7
- Expedition equipment, including 2-person shared tent, splash jacket (spring and cold weather trips only), wetsuits*, and dry bags
- High-quality inflatable rafts and related river equipment including paddle, helmet, and personal flotation device
- All Transfers between Mother Lode and the river(s)

What's not included?

- Transportation to and from Mother Lode River Center
- Pre- and post-course accommodations and meals
- Sleeping bag and pad (these items may be rented from O.A.R.S.)
- Insurance of any kind
- Items of personal nature (an equipment list will be provided)
- Gratuities

SOMETHING VOLUNTARY

- In reviewing your statement, you'll notice a \$1/person/day donation to American Rivers, a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to Wild and Scenic Rivers. One hundred percent of these funds go directly to protecting Wild and Scenic Rivers and your contribution is tax-deductible. This donation is voluntary and may be removed from your invoice if you choose not to participate. *Please notify our office to delete the donation from your balance.*
- The O.A.R.S Foundation is a not-for-profit 501©3 organization with the express goal of providing opportunities for young people to experience the magic of a river trip. Visit www.oarsfoundation.org to learn more about how your tax deductible donation can change young lives for the better.

A Few Important Details

Reservations and Deposits

- A \$250/person deposit is required at the time of reservation. The balance is due 60 days prior to departure.

Cancellations and Refunds

- If you find it necessary to cancel your trip, notify us as soon as possible. All payments are nonrefundable and we regret that we cannot make exceptions for personal emergencies. For this reason, we strongly urge our participants to investigate trip cancellation insurance (see Insurance).
- If you transfer from one trip to another, there is a \$50/person charge up until 60 days before the trip. Transfers made after this time will be treated as cancellations.

Medical

- Under most circumstances, if you are of an adventurous spirit and in reasonably good health, you should have no problem enjoying an O.A.R.S. trip. People with medical conditions, including pregnancy, should have a physician's approval before taking an adventure travel trip.

Insurance

- Although every effort is made to insure a safe trip for all, we strongly recommend that you protect yourself, your belongings, and your vacation through the purchase of a short-term traveler's policy. A trip cancellation policy

covers your non-refundable payments in most cases, should you have to cancel your trip at the last minute due to illness or injury. Trip participants should realize that in the event of illness or injury on an adventure travel trip, evacuation can be prolonged, difficult and expensive. Personal belongings and cameras are carried entirely at the owner's risk, and O.A.R.S. accepts no responsibility for lost, damaged, delayed or stolen property.

Liability Waiver

- Everyone is required to sign a standard release before the trip, acknowledging awareness that some risks are associated with the trip. Safety is of the utmost concern on our trips. However, due to the nature of the activities, a condition of your participation is that you will sign this form and return it to our office before the trip begins. Anyone who refuses to sign the form will not be allowed to participate, and consistent with O.A.R.S. cancellation policy, there will be no refund of the trip fees at that time.

Responsibility – An Important Notice

- O.A.R.S. West, Inc. and cooperating agencies act only in the capacity of agent for the participants in all matters relating to transportation and/or all other related travel services, and assume no responsibility however caused for injury, loss or damage to person or property in connection with any service, including but not limited to that resulting directly or indirectly from acts of God, detention, annoyance, delays and expenses arising from quarantine, strikes, theft, pilferage, force majeure, failure of any means of conveyance to arrive or depart as scheduled, civil disturbances, government restrictions or regulations, and discrepancies or change in transit over which it has no control. Reasonable changes in itinerary may be made where deemed advisable for the comfort and well being of the participants, including cancellation due to water fluctuation, insufficient bookings (this trip requires a minimum of 6 guests), and other factors. There is risk in whitewater rafting, particularly during high-water conditions. Rafts, dories and kayaks do capsize. You could be swept overboard. Your guide will make every attempt to assist, but you must be strong and agile enough to “self-help” and “float-it-out” without further endangering yourself or others. We reserve the right not to accept passengers weighing more than 260 pounds or with a waist/chest size exceeding 56 inches. We may decide, at any time, to exclude any person or group for any reason we feel is related to the safety of our trips. We are experienced at accommodating people with various disabilities. Please give us an opportunity to make you feel welcome. We need to discuss any special requirements ahead of time. On advancement of deposit the depositor agrees to be bound by the above recited terms and conditions. Prices subject to change without notice.

Contact Information:

- For more information on this or any of our over 75 rafting, sea kayaking, or multi-sport adventures, please call 1-800-346-6277 in the USA or Canada or 1-209-736-4677 if outside the USA or Canada or email us at info@oars.com and one of our knowledgeable adventure consultants will be happy to help you.

©2012 O.A.R.S. West, Inc. 1/27/11 CW